

Cinderella

Italy

Once upon a time there was a man who had three daughters. He was once ordered to go away to work, and said to them, "Since I am about making a journey, what do you want me to bring you when I return?"

One asked for a handsome dress; the other, a fine hat and a beautiful shawl. He said to the youngest, "And you, Cinderella, what do you want?" They called her Cinderella because she always sat in the chimney corner.

"You must buy me a little bird Verdeliò."

"The simpleton! She does not know what to do with the bird! Instead of ordering a handsome dress, a fine shawl, she takes a bird. Who knows what she will do with it!"

"Silence!" she says. "It pleases me."

The father went, and on his return brought the dress, hat, and shawl for the two sisters, and the little bird for Cinderella.

The father was employed at the court, and one day the king said to him, "I am going to give three balls; if you want to bring your daughters, do so; they will amuse themselves a little."

"As you wish," he replies, "thanks!" and accepts.

He went home and said, "What do you think, girls? His majesty wishes you to attend his ball."

"There, you see, Cinderella, if you had only asked for a handsome dress! This evening we are going to the ball."

She replied, "It matters nothing to me! You go; I am not coming."

In the evening, when the time came, they adorned themselves, saying to Cinderella, "Come along, there will be room for you, too."

"I don't want to go; you go; I don't want to."

"But," said their father, "let us go, let us go! Dress and come along; let her stay."

When they had gone, she went to the bird and said, "O Bird Verdeliò, make me more beautiful than I am!"

She became clothed in a sea green dress, with so many diamonds that it blinded you to behold her. The bird made ready two purses of money, and said to her, "Take these two purses, enter your carriage, and away!"

She set out for the ball, and left the bird Verdeliò at home. She entered the ballroom. Scarcely had the gentlemen seen this beautiful lady (she dazzled them on all sides), when the king, just think of it, began to dance with her the whole evening. After he had danced with her all the evening, his majesty stopped, and she stood by her sisters. While she was at her sisters' side, she drew out her handkerchief, and a bracelet fell out.

"Oh, Signora," said the eldest sister, "you have dropped this."

"Keep it for yourself," she said.

"Oh, if Cinderella were only here, who knows what might not have happened to her?"

The king had given orders that when this lady went away they should find out where she lived. After she had remained a little she left the ball. You can imagine whether the servants were on the lookout! She entered her carriage and away! She perceives that she is followed, takes the money and begins to throw it out of the window of the carriage. The greedy servants, I tell you, seeing all that money, thought no more of her, but stopped to pick up the money. She returned home and went upstairs.

"O Bird Verdeliò, make me homelier than I am!" You ought to see how ugly, how horrid, she became, all ashes.

When the sisters returned, they cried, "Cin-der-ella!"

"Oh, leave her alone," said her father. "She is asleep now, leave her along!"

But they went up and showed her the large and beautiful bracelet. "Do you see, you simpleton? You might have had it."

"It matters nothing to me."

Their father said, "Let us go to supper, you little geese."

Let us return to the king, who was awaiting her servants, who had not the courage to appear, but kept away. He calls them. "How did the matter go?"

The fall at his feet. "Thus and thus! She threw out so much money!"

"Wretches, you are nothing else," he said. "Were you afraid of not being rewarded? Well! tomorrow evening, attention, under pain of death."

The next evening the usual ball. The sisters say, "Will you come this evening, Cinderella?"

"Oh," she says, "don't bother me! I don't want to go."

Their father cries out to them, "How troublesome you are! Let her alone!"

So they began to adorn themselves more handsomely than the former evening, and departed. "Good-bye, Cinderella!"

When they had gone, Cinderella went to the bird and said, "Little Bird Verdeliò, make me more beautiful than I am!" Then she became clothed in sea green, embroidered with all the fish of the sea, mingled with diamonds more than you could believe.

The bird said, "Take these two bags of sand, and when you are followed, throw it out, and so they will be blinded."

She entered her carriage and set out for the ball. As soon as his majesty saw her he began to dance with her and danced as long as he could. After he had danced as long as he could (she did not grow weary, but he did), she placed herself near her sisters, drew out her handkerchief, and there fell out a beautiful necklace all made of coal.

The second sister said, "Signora, you have dropped this."

She replied, "Keep it for yourself."

"If Cinderella were here, who knows what might not happen to her! Tomorrow she must come!"

After a while she leaves the ball. The servants (just think, under pain of death!) were all on the alert, and followed her. She began to throw out all the sand, and they were blinded. She went home, dismounted, and went upstairs.

"Little Bird Verdeliò, make me homelier than I am!" She became frightfully homely.

When her sisters returned they began from below, "Cin-der-ella! if you only knew what that lady gave us!"

"It matters nothing to me!"

"Yes, yes! you would have had it!"

The father says, "Let us go to supper and let her alone; you are really silly!"

Let us return to his majesty, who was waiting for his servants to learn where she lived. Instead of that they were all brought back blinded, and had to be accompanied. "Rogue!" he exclaimed, "either this lady is some fairy or she must have some fairy who protects her."

The next day the sisters began, "Cinderella, you must go this evening! Listen; it is the last evening; you must come."

The father: "Oh let her alone! You are always teasing her!"

Then they went away and began to prepare for the ball. When they were all prepared, they went to the ball with their father.

When they had departed, Cinderella went to the bird: "Little Bird Verdeliò, make me more beautiful than I am!" Then she was dressed in all the colors of the heavens; all the comets, the stars, and moon on her dress, and the sun on her brow. She enters the ballroom. Who could look at her! For the sun alone they lower their eyes, and are all blinded. His majesty began to dance, but he could not look at her, because she dazzled him. He had already given orders to his servants to be on the lookout, under pain of death, not to go on foot, but to mount their horses that evening.

After she had danced longer than on the previous evenings she placed herself by her father's side, drew out her handkerchief, and there fell out a snuffbox of gold, full of money.

"Signora, you have dropped this snuffbox."

"Keep it for yourself!"

Imagine that man. He opens it and sees it full of money. What a joy!

After she had remained a time she went home as usual. The servants followed her on horseback, quickly, at a distance from the carriage; but on horseback that was not much trouble. She perceived that she had not prepared anything to throw that evening.

"Oh!" she cried. "What shall I do?" She left the carriage quickly, and in her haste lost one of her slippers. The servants picked it up, took the number of the house, and went away.

Cinderella went upstairs and said, "Little Bird Verdeliò, make me more homely than I am!"

The bird does not answer. After she had repeated it three or four times, it answered, "Rogue! I ought not to make you more homely, but ..." and she became homely and the bird continued, "What are you going to do now? You are discovered."

She began to weep in earnest. When her sisters returned they cried, "Cin-der-ella!" You can imagine that she did not answer them this evening. "See what a beautiful snuffbox. If you had gone you might have had it."

"I do not care! Go away!"

Then their father called them to supper.

Let us now turn to the servants who went back with the slipper and the number of the house.

"Tomorrow," said his majesty, "as soon as it is day, go to that house, take a carriage, and bring that lady to the palace."

The servants took the slipper and went away. The next morning they knocked at the door. Cinderella's father looked out and exclaimed, "Oh heavens! It is his majesty's carriage. What does it mean?" They open the door and the servants ascend. "What do you want of me?" asked the father.

"How many daughters have you?"

"Two."

"Well, show them to us."

The father made them come in there.

"Sit down," they said to one of them. They tried the slipper on her; it was ten times too large for her. The other one sat down; it was too small for her. "But tell me, good man, have you no other daughters? Take care to tell the truth! because majesty wishes it, under pain of death!"

"Gentlemen, there is another one, but I do not mention it. She is all in the ashes, the coals. If you should see her! I do not call her my daughter from shame."

"We have not come for beauty, or for finery; we want to see the girl!"

Her sisters began to call her, "Cin-der-ella!" but she did not answer.

After a time she said, "What is the matter?"

"You must come down! There are some gentlemen who wish to see you."

"I don't want to come."

"But you must come, you see!"

"Very well; tell them I will come in a moment." She went to the little bird: "Ah little Bird Verdeliò, make me more beautiful than I am!" Then she was dressed as she had been the last evening, with the sun, and moon, and stars, and in addition, great chains all of gold everywhere about her.

The bird said, "Take me away with you! Put me in your bosom!" She puts the bird in her bosom and begins to descend the stairs.

"Do you hear her?" said the father. "Do you hear her? She is dragging with her the chains from the chimney corner. You can imagine how frightful she will look!"

When she reached the last step, and they saw her, "Ah!" they exclaimed, and recognized the lady of the ball. You can imagine how her father and sisters were vexed. They made her sit down, and tried on the slipper, and it fitted her. Then they made her enter the carriage, and took her to his majesty, who recognized the lady of the other evenings. And you can imagine that, all in love as her was, he said to her, "Will you really be my wife?"

You may believe she consents. She sends for her father and sisters, and makes them all come to the palace. They celebrate the marriage. Imagine what fine festivals were given at this wedding! The servants who had discovered where Cinderella lived were promoted to the highest positions in the palace as a reward.

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- Source: Thomas Frederick Crane, *Italian Popular Tales* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1885), no. 9, pp. 42-47.
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